

Philip Marks Removals

Tips & Advice for Home Movers

This advice is borne out of many years running a removal company, during which time we've not only moved customers but also friends, relatives and ourselves. So we've seen this from several perspectives. The single most important thing is - be prepared for the moving day - so don't waste time when you have the opportunity to get something ticked off the list.

Our checklist is designed to help you do things in the best order. All leading up to the big day! We've found that our customers who have a smooth removal day have printed this guide and ticked the jobs off the list, freeing their time up on moving day, which is great if something unexpected crops up.

If you know you're moving but you don't know the date then don't be complacent. Many people make the mistake of convincing themselves that "it'll be alright" rather than making preparations. The list may seem long but some jobs can be done quickly so tick them off and you'll feel better.

Things to do before Moving Day

Choose When You Move

Everyone seems to want to move on a Friday, at the end of the month, in the summer. We appreciate that people who are buying/selling property and moving on completion of contract will have to accommodate everyone in their chain but - if you can choose to avoid peak times this will help.

Also ask your conveyancing solicitor about the cut-off time which is mentioned in the exchange documents. This is the exact time on moving day when you're contracted to vacate your house for the buyer. It's often 1PM as a default but there's no reason why you couldn't agree a different time with your buyer. It's much more time-consuming to load a removal van than to unload it so it makes sense to have a later cut-off time if you can

Get Removals Quotations

Don't worry if you think it's too early. Professional Removal Companies will be happy to give you a free quotation even if you don't know your moving date. Much better to know the cost well in advance and take advice from people who do it all the time.

Declutter

This is a good idea even if you're not moving. Every item which you get rid of lightens your load. One thing less to think of, one thing less to pack, one thing less to weigh down the lorry and best of all one thing less to clutter your new home up. Go to your loft, go to your shed and go to the back of your cupboards and ask yourself:- "do I want to pay a removal company to move this?" If you want to keep it you have to be prepared to pay a removal firm to move it.

Get Good Boxes

Your treasured belongings need to be protected in boxes which will be stacked up in the removal lorry. It's important that boxes are strong enough for this and that they are not overfilled, so a box protects its contents and takes the weight of the box on top. This won't happen if the box was designed to carry crisps to a supermarket so ask us and we'll be happy to supply you with strong industry standard high quality twin wall boxes. The maxim "you get what you pay for" applies to packing materials (including tape) more so than some other things in life.



Start Packing

If you want to save yourself the cost of our professional packing service it's best that you start as soon as you can. At this stage you're just thinking of non essential items. Anything which you don't use often, get it in a box, seal it with tape and a quick description of contents and destination in marker pen on the top. When we pack for our customers we often write this on the tape. Please don't fill large boxes with books, CD's or too many heavy items. It's our job to be strong but boxes should be a one man lift. Even if you've no idea when moving day will be it's best to get the packing underway to avoid being overwhelmed and running out of time.



Find a Handyman

Anything which is fitted or connected will need expert attention. Great if you can do this yourself but if you can't it's worth asking for recommendations for someone who can. Shelves may need unscrewing, light fittings may need taking down. The cooker, washing machine, dishwasher and maybe the fridge will need disconnecting. It's worth having a plan for this. We've lost count of the people we've moved who've struggled to disconnect their washing machine because the connection tap was seized with chalk from the water supply. A good tradesman will know how to get around problems which you won't.



Service the Car

This may not seem important if you're moving locally but you do need to depend on your car between the time when moving day is set and the time after you've moved and you've got settled. Better to know early that the car will be reliable than to have that trip you up when you're busy working to a deadline. This is clearly more serious if you're moving long distance - we have seen an unfortunate customer whose car broke down during a long journey on moving day.



Run Down Foodstocks

If you have a freezer full, an extensive pantry and bulging cupboards in your kitchen it's time to thin them out. Save yourself some money at the supermarket by depleting your stocks. For short distance moves we often move freezers with contents but only at the risk of our customer. If there's a delay on moving day you'll have enough to think about without worrying if the freezer is defrosting. There's no gain in paying to move foodstocks and anything that could tip or spill is a hazard best eliminated. If you're moving into store we can't take food so you'll have to separate all food from the removal.

When You've Set Your Moving Date :-



Redirect your Post

You can do this online at royalmail.com or you can collect a special form from the post office. Also send some cards to friends and family informing them of your big event. There are various resources aimed at helping you remember everyone who needs to be informed, check out:- iammoving.com or else lothmove.com which will inform all your utilities at once and loads of others, saving time with this tedious task. So many people to inform, don't forget your:



- Doctor
- Dentist
- Optician
- Vet
- The Electoral Register
- Vehicle log books

- TV licence
- Local Council (tax)
- HMRC Inland Revenue
- Telephones

Arrange for your landline to be disconnected and reconnected at your new house. We've occasionally seen customers in some disarray because this went wrong. Best make sure important people know your mobile number at this stage and also inform them if you're moving to somewhere with no signal.

- Estate Agent
- Solicitor
- Removals Company

Also keep track of your phone charger - it might be worth investing in a car charger for your mobile phone.

Book Accommodation

This applies to people who are moving long distance or have big or complicated removals. If the logistics of your move require accommodation book your hotel well in advance, some times of year places become very busy. This applies to kennels & catteries for pets as well! We'll do our best to make the logistics of your removal as simple as possible but if you have lots to move and/or a long way to go make sure you book any accommodation early.

Arrange Parking

We need to get our removals vehicles as close to the door for both loading and unloading. Where parking restrictions exist you may need to inform the local council or the private parking company if there is an enforcement on private land. If parking is very busy you may need to reserve a spot for the lorry by parking your cars there the night before. If our presence is likely to inconvenience your neighbours it's polite to put a note through their door a day or two in advance.

Children

Moving day is often just too busy for young children. You're likely to have plenty to do without keeping them from getting under the feet of removals men. Do your best to get them looked after by a friend or relative, another thing to arrange in advance! On a different point, it's common for parents to make the mistake of expecting older children & teenagers to pack their own bedroom. We're sure some can do this but many don't. It's too late to tell them off when we arrive.

Keys are Crucial

Make sure you know where you're going to collect the keys to your new property from, who is in charge of them and when they'll be available. If you're buying a house ask the vendor in advance to show you any difficult locks, to label all keys and to show you how to operate any burglar alarm. On moving into your new house, time will be at a premium, so you don't want to waste half an hour fiddling with keys and locks. Similarly it's polite to label all your spare keys and leave them out for your buyer so they don't have the same problem.

Visit Your New House

Don't worry about being a nuisance to your estate agent, landlord or seller, moving is the most important thing you're doing and there are things which you need to know. Where is the:-

- Stopcock, fuseboard & gas meter
- How does the central heating work?

Are they leaving any matching paint and if not what exact colour is it, in case you need to touch something in. Also it's hard to evaluate everything at once when you choose a new home so this is an opportunity to decide where large items of furniture will fit, who gets which bedroom and if there are any jobs you want to do when it's yours.

Take Stock of Your Jobs

Especially if you're packing yourself you need to evaluate how long you've got before moving day and what needs to be done. Better to be brutally honest and admit that you're snowed under than to tell yourself "it'll be alright". If you're confident that's fine but, if you're not, get some help. It's hard to do everything and lots of people underestimate how long things take.

On Your Last Few Days Before Moving :-

Get Important Items Together - All packed in a bag.

- Documents
- Pen
- Passport
- Vital medication, Paracetamol/Ibuprophen
- Mobile phone charger
- Change of clothes
- A few toiletries
- And probably - a Bottle opener!

Lock this in your car on moving day. It's crucial to keep important items away from your removals men on loading day and also away from them on packing day. Once something important is in the middle of a loaded removals lorry there's no opportunity to look for it until the lorry is unloaded! You might also want to keep some other essentials in the car so they can easily be found:-

- A simple tool kit
- Loo rolls
- Light bulbs
- A vase, hopefully someone will give you flowers!

Dismantle Furniture

We'll happily quote to dismantle/reassemble furniture. If you're doing this yourself it's time to think about this. Any furniture which is just too big to move will have to be dismantled - beds, cots, wardrobes and desks. You might feel confident to do this yourself on the morning of removal day but if you're not - do it early. When we provide a dismantling service we remove the screw-in pegs which lock chip-board furniture together (otherwise these are easily knocked sideways) also we stretch-wrap the smaller bits and fittings together to aid reassembly.

This is also the time to make sure your Handyman is on schedule with any unscrewing of fixtures or disconnecting of appliances.

Have a last Declutter

Throw out anything which isn't worth packing. This includes all packets/packs/bottles of foodstuffs which have been opened. Do you really need that quarter full bottle of mulled wine that hasn't been touched since the Christmas before last? We don't want to put rubbish on our removal lorry so get rid of it on the last bin day before moving.

Fridges & Freezers

Fridges must be empty for moving, reduce the contents of your fridge to a minimum. If you're moving locally and you want us to move your freezer with frozen contents then please place contents into carrier bags so we can easily remove them and replace after the freezer has been carried to the lorry. If you're moving long distance your freezer needs to be completely defrosted. If you're moving into store we also recommend that you use a bleach spray and wipe the interior dry with kitchen roll.

Packing Yourself?

All small items need to be in strong, sealed, stackable boxes, marked on the top with their destination room by the night before removal day. Sometimes it's useful to mark boxes "open first" depending on the importance of their contents. Congratulations if you really have done this - not many people can! Lampshades removed from lamps and boxed. Pictures bubble wrapped and boxed. Garden tools bundled together with stretch-wrap or tape. A last box of toiletries in the bathroom ready to be sealed in the morning. A last box in the kitchen ready for the kettle when the lorry has been loaded.

Garden

If rain is forecast it's helpful to get potted plants, garden furniture & kids toys undercover to save them going on the removal lorry wet with your house contents. In the summertime we'll thank you to avoid watering potted plants just before moving day.

On Moving Day:-

Put the Kettle On!

Have your first cuppa and contemplate the day. A busy day goes better if you start by running through it in your head. Keep the kettle ready, moving house is hard work and everyone will be grateful for an occasional cuppa.

Children & Pets

Drop them off to be cared for elsewhere if you can. If you've no option but to have them around please have a plan to keep them out of the way of people carrying heavy objects.

Important Items

Lock them in the car. If you don't have a car they need to be all in one place clearly marked "do not load on removal lorry". If there are items which you're leaving these all need to be clearly marked too.

Strip the Beds

Put your bedding in a bag together with your important items. You don't want it mixed up and lost amongst everything else which you own.

Toiletries

After everyone's used the bathroom the last toiletries can be sealed in a box and marked.

Loading the Lorry

Your removal team will arrive, introduce themselves and start loading. Any special instructions are best made with clear notices rather than verbally, we're only human and verbal messages sometimes don't go around the whole team. Our method blends the imperatives of caring for your belongings, making use of loading space and making progress. In many circumstances we will try and load bedrooms before downstairs. Some customers are concerned about cleaning, if you want certain areas loaded first let us know and we'll do our best. It makes sense to load bedrooms first so upstairs can be cleaned while we're working downstairs. We often load garden, garage & shed last.

Before You Leave

Read the meters. Some people just take a picture with their smartphone. Have a last look around with your removal men. It's your responsibility to make sure nothing is left behind. Double check that you've given us your new address - just in case!

Lunch

Lunch usually takes half an hour between houses when we move locally. When we move long distance we'll keep you informed of our progress.

Open Your New Front Door!

Check out your new house. If you want us to put carpet protector down please let us know. Unloading goes much easier if we know which room is which and your boxes and smaller items are marked accordingly. Downstairs is usually self explanatory but for bedrooms it's helpful to have a name on each door. Numbers on each door are fine but names are more intuitive.

Take Charge of Unloading

Let us know exactly where your larger items need to be placed. As we unload it's helpful if you're around the back of the lorry letting us know what goes where.

Check the Lorry

When we've unloaded check that the lorry's empty for your peace of mind. Also if you have any furniture which needs re-arranging we'll be happy to oblige. Most customers pay by transfer in advance but if you're paying cash it's time to settle up.

Make the Beds

Or better still delegate this job to a family member or friend whilst you're busy elsewhere.

Enjoy Your New Home!

Maybe order a takeaway meal. Your new chapter starts here.

Ashford : 01233 220 460
Gravesend : 01474 550 287
Maidstone : 01622 672 217

Medway : 01634 560 759
Sittingbourne : 01795 500 828
Tonbridge : 01732 445 006

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